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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
11 June 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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State Department review completed

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HIGHLIGHTS

Allied forces are continuing to apply pressure both on the ground and from the air on elements of a PAVN regiment in western Kontum Province, while the Viet Cong have responded with their second battalion-size attack in two days in the northern coastal region. Buddhists demonstrated briefly in the streets of Saigon today as the stalemate in Hue continued. The Ky government is apparently preparing several major political steps for 19 June, its first anniversary.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Allied forces participating in Operation HAWTHORNE continue to maintain heavy pressure on major elements of 24th PAVN Regiment in western Kontum Province (Para. 1). ARVN forces have terminated reaction/pursuit Operation QUYET THANG 234 with heavy losses in Quang Ngai Province (Para. 2). Operations APACHE and FLORIDA/DOAN KET 1 terminated in Quang Tin and Thua Thien provinces, respectively (Para. 3). A Viet Cong battalion inflicted heavy personnel and weapons losses on a Regional Forces company in Binh Dinh Province (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Buddhist demonstrators were active in Saigon streets today for the first time in more than a week, but were dispersed by riot control forces (Paras. 1-2). Earlier today, Buddhist Institute Chairman Tam Chau had urged Buddhists to remove their altars from the streets, particularly in the Saigon area (Para. 3). Changes in Premier Ky's cabinet are apparently imminent, and may be announced on 19 June to coincide with a number of other government activities planned on Ky's first anniversary as premier (Para. 4). A stalemate between the government and "struggle" forces continues in Hue, but Premier Ky may attempt to settle the issue this week (Paras. 4-7).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

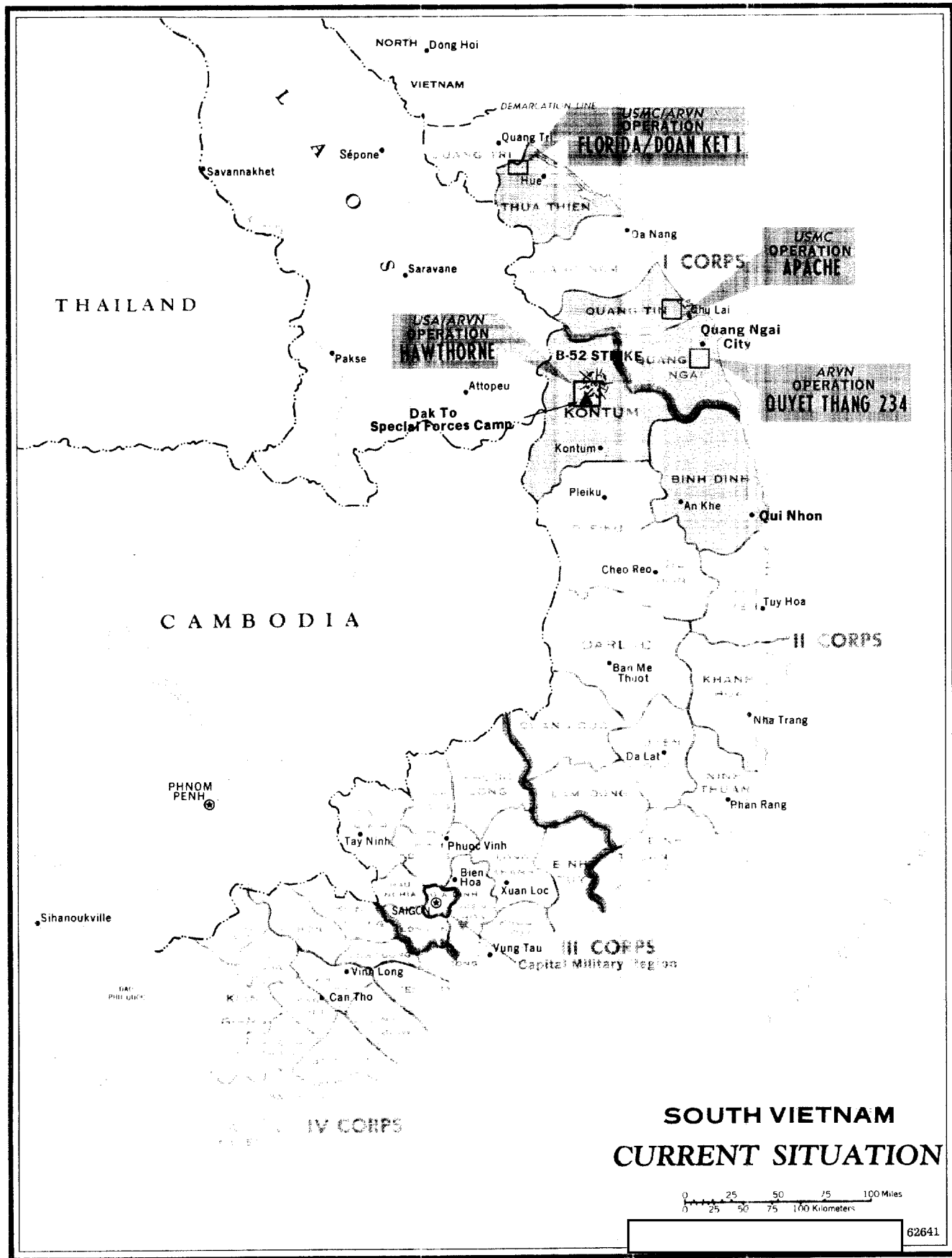
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is
nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US and South Vietnamese forces participating in the major allied campaign in western Kontum Province--Operation HAWTHORNE--are continuing to maintain heavy pressure on at least two battalions of the 24th PAVN Regiment in strongly entrenched positions north of Dak To Special Forces camp. US ground exploitation of portions of this fortified area which were struck last night by 24 USAF B-52 Stratofortresses has thus far resulted in 37 enemy troops killed. The action raises cumulative Communist losses in the 11-day ground sweep to 446 killed and six captured. Allied casualties to date total 39 killed (31 US), 188 wounded (166 US), and three US missing.

2. Four ARVN battalions have terminated Operation QUYET THANG 234, a reaction/pursuit mission launched in response to the 12 June Viet Cong battalion-size attack against a Regional Forces company nine miles south of Quang Ngai city. Government casualties, including those sustained by paramilitary troops in the initial attack, have been placed at 67 killed (three US), 134 wounded, and three US missing. Enemy losses totaled 22 killed, nine captured, and 12 suspects apprehended.

3. USMC Operation APACHE (5-12 June) and combined USMC/ARVN Operation FLORIDA/DOAN KET 1 (9-11 June), in Quang tin and Thua Thien provinces, respectively, have been terminated. The operations resulted in combined enemy losses of 42 killed and eight captured, as against friendly casualties of one ARVN killed and 12 wounded (eight US).

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Viet Cong Activity

4. An estimated Viet Cong battalion early today attacked the field positions of a Vietnamese Regional Forces company 23 miles northeast of Qui Nhon in coastal Binh Dinh Province. Government forces sustained heavy losses, initially placed at 32 killed, 34 wounded, 40 missing, and 119 weapons captured. Enemy casualties have not been determined. A company-size ROK reaction force has deployed to the area by road, but has thus far failed to re-establish contact with the attackers. Today's action marked the second major Communist attack in as many days against company-strength Regional Forces soldiers in South Vietnam's north-central coastal region.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Buddhist Activities in Saigon

1. For the first time in more than a week, Buddhist monks and youths staged a demonstration in Saigon streets this evening (Vietnam time). Riot control forces dispersed an estimated 100 monks and 1,000 youths as they attempted to march into the downtown area from the Buddhist Institute. Banners carried by the demonstrators denounced any elections or a constituent assembly organized under the present government, and charged that President Johnson was responsible for "oppressing" Buddhism.

2. The demonstration followed an unsuccessful attempt to hold a ceremony protesting US support of the Ky government, according to the press. Yesterday, Buddhists had invited US and Vietnamese government officials to the Institute today to receive US-supplied tear gas grenades used by government security forces to disperse Buddhist demonstrators. Neither group accepted the invitation.

3. Earlier today, Institute Chairman Tam Chau called for an end to the use of Buddhist altars as roadblocks. Chau's statement was directed particularly at Buddhist followers in the Saigon area, following an attempt last night by several hundred youths to block streets near the Vien Hoa Dao pagoda with family altars. However, Chau concluded with the "hope" that all Buddhists and Buddhist committees--obviously referring to central Vietnam--would comply with his directive. According to the press, Tam Chau left Saigon today before the start of the demonstration.

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Cabinet Changes Likely

4. [REDACTED] Premier Ky is planning to make several changes in his cabinet within the next few days. Pressure for such a move is undoubtedly being exerted by the military faction of "young turks," whose influence has been increasing since the government's successful move on Da Nang on 15 May. The ministers most likely to be replaced are a group of about six who had threatened to resign if the government applied force against the dissidents in Da Nang during the March-April period when the government's position was a good deal weaker than it is at present. The official announcement of any changes may be made on 19 June, the first anniversary of the Ky government. A number of other events are being planned by the government for the same date including the promulgation of the election law, the establishment of the civilian-military advisory council, and a major address by Ky.

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Hue

5. There was apparently no marked change today in the stalemate between the government and "struggle" forces in Hue. Police field forces, including another company which arrived today from Saigon, are apparently replacing elements of the local First Division as guard forces in some areas of the city. According to the press, a crowd gathered around one of the First Division units while it was being relieved, but the mob eventually dispersed without serious incident. The US Embassy has reported that the number of altars in the streets has not decreased.

6. The Vietnamese airborne and marine battalions from Saigon, which have been operating against the Viet Cong several miles northwest of Hue for the past several days, passed through the city today without incident. These forces, which have been the subject of considerable speculation by the population in Hue and which have caused apprehension, reportedly are slated to leave the area now that their routine military operation (FLORIDA/DOAN KET 1) has been terminated.

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7. The US Embassy has commented, however, that Premier Ky may decide to reassert governmental authority in Hue this week before the 19 June anniversary of his government.

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